States Grants (Schools Assistance) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1987

Date Introduced: 5 November 1987
House: House of Representatives

Digest of Bill

Purpose
To provide for funding for schools in 1988; to provide retrospective cost adjustments for 1987 grants; and to double the per capita grant for new arrivals under the English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Background
The Commonwealth provides grants to the States and Northern Territory for recurrent and capital purposes in respect of both government and private schools. The grants represent 11% of spending on government schools and 36% of spending on private schools. Real per capita grants in respect of government and private primary schools will increase by an estimated 4% in 1988 compared with 1987, while for private secondary schools the increase will be approximately 3% and 11% in respect of government secondary schools. This Bill will appropriate $1739 million for the schools program in 1988, consisting of $1339 million for recurrent grants, $222 million for capital grants and $178 million for specific purpose grants. In addition, $9 million will be appropriated to supplement 1987 grants.

As part of the ESL program, the Minister may determine that amounts be payable in respect of new arrivals learning English. The maximum amount that may be paid in such cases is set out in the Principal Act and is currently $1011 per person. The amendments contained in this Bill will allow the Minister to determine that payments of approximately double this amount be made in 1988.

Main Provisions
Section 3 of the Principal Act will be amended by clause 3 to substitute a new definition of 'eligible new arrival'. A person will be an eligible new arrival in relation to a year if they are a permanent resident whose first language is a language other than English and arrived after 31 July in the previous year.
Section 5 of the Principal Act deals with the amount that may be paid in respect of new arrivals under the ESL program. This section will be amended to increase the maximum payment in respect of a new arrival from $1011 to $1017, and to insert a new sub-section that will allow grants to a maximum of $2057 in 1988 (clause 5).

Section 26 will be amended to insert conditions on which financial assistance may be granted to the States in respect of block grants. Such grants are to be used to meet expenditure, for an administrative fee determined by the Minister and for legal proceedings authorised by the Minister (clause 17).

Clauses 18 to 44 will extend existing programs to 1988.

Clause 45 will substitute new Schedules into the Principal Act which deal with grants in 1988 and the adjustment of 1987 grants for cost increases.

References
1. 1987–88 Budget Paper No. 1, p. 106

For further information, if required, contact the Education and Welfare Group.

8 December 1987

Bills Digest Service
Legislative Research Service

This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.

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